

Google Windows apps coming to Linux

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Google and CodeWeavers Inc. are working together to bring Google's popular Windows Picasa photo editing and sharing program to Linux. The program is now in a limited beta test. If this program is successful, other Google applications will be following it to the Linux desktop, sources say.

The Linux Picasa implementation includes the full feature set of the Windows Picasa 2.x software. It is not, strictly speaking, a port of Picasa to Linux. Instead, Linux Picasa combines Windows Picasa code and Wine technology to run Windows Picasa on Linux. This, however, will be transparent to Linux users, when they download, install, and run the free program on their systems.

Wine is an open-source implementation of the Windows API (application programming interface). It runs, in turn, on top of the X Window System and Linux (or Unix). Wine is not, as has sometimes been said, a Windows emulator. Wine provides a Windows API middleware layer that enables Windows programs, such as Office 2003, to run on Linux without the slowing effects of an operating system emulation or a virtual machine. Indeed, in some respects, Wine on Linux is faster than XP on the same hardware.

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